

## **KANEGASAKI SISTER CITY COMMITTEE**

### **Fiscal Year 2013**

**Committee Members: Denise Boyd, Florence Boynton (Treasurer), Eli Cohen, Aaron Kropf, Helen MacMellon (Vice-Chair), Julia Mahoney, Kathleen Woods Masalski (Chair), Nancy Pagano (Staff Liaison), Diana Stein (Select Board Liaison), William Stenzel**

Between July 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013, the Kanegasaki Sister City Committee (KSCC) remained dedicated to its purpose: to promote friendship and ongoing relations with the Town of Kanegasaki, Japan, Amherst's sister city since 1993. To accomplish this purpose, the Committee sponsored special events and maintained contacts amongst residents, educational and governmental bodies of the two communities that contributed to the mutual benefit of each. Following is a rough chronology of events related to the KSCC charge during fiscal year 13.

Throughout the year, KSCC Chair, Kathy Woods Masalski, continued to work organizing the KSCC archives located in the Jones Library Special Collections and interviewing individuals who were involved with the establishment of our sister-city relationship at Amherst Media, our cable television station.

At the August meeting, Bessie Young, recent Amherst College graduate, gave the Committee and Amherst Senior Center guests a power point presentation of her photographs about care for the elderly in Japan after her recent two-week stay in Kanegasaki. The KSCC was proud to have had a major role in working with Mayor Takahashi and the Kanegasaki Life Long Learning Center to make this visit possible. During her visit, Bessie stayed in and/or visited in three elder care group homes.

In October, the Committee welcomed new members, Tina Swift, from the Jones Library staff and Will Stenzel, a recent graduate of the UMass Asian studies program. Nancy and Denise put together a package of Halloween items which was sent over to Kanegasaki Middle school students, together with a description of our Halloween traditions. Also, the Committee began brainstorming ideas for next year's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Kathy Woods Masalski is heading the KSCC sub-committee planning the associated events.

In November, the Committee received a letter from Mayor Takahashi accepting the KSCC invitation to bring a delegation to Amherst from September 29<sup>th</sup> – Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, for the 20th anniversary celebration of the Sister City friendship agreement. The committee started a comprehensive review & update of its "old members/friends of the KSCC mailing list" with an eye towards future fundraising to help support the upcoming 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Fundraising, finding local sponsors and Town funds for these various events will be important.

The bulk of the meetings in January, February and March were taken up with the many details of the March 20-24<sup>th</sup> Kanegasaki student visit to Amherst. This year we had a large group of 17 middle school students, 3 chaperones and a Japanese tour guide. Eight families provided home stays for the students and the chaperones stayed at the newly renovated Lord Jeffrey Inn

(which they loved). Some highlights were attending classes with Amherst students, visiting the Emily Dickinson Museum, touring Yankee Candle, having a bowling party, and performing for the host families and KSCC at the Farewell Potluck at the Amherst Regional High School. Middle School Guidance Counselor and KSCC member, Denise Boyd, continues to put a tremendous effort into organizing this annual visit for the Amherst Regional Middle School. She reports that it gets harder each year to find host families, probably as a result of Amherst not sending our students over to Kanegasaki. The KSCC hopes that the ARMS somehow finds a source of funds to send Amherst students to Kanegasaki as they have in the past.

At the end of March, Nancy and Helen attended a dinner at the residence of the Consul General of Japan in Boston. Representatives from ten sister city committees across the state attended and gave brief presentations of their activities. Nancy gave the KSCC presentation about Amherst's sister city activities over the past 20 years.